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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

24 February 1951

SUBJECT: NIE-29: YUGOSLAVIA

THE PROBLEM

To assess the capabilities and intentions of the USSR and its European Satellites with respect to action against Yugoslavia during 1951.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito Government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure.

2. We believe that Tito's regime could not be overthrown during 1951 by a Soviet-inspired coup or by internal revolt and that, therefore, Satellite or Soviet-Satellite invasion would be necessary to achieve this objective.

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3. Recent military build-up in the Satellite countries (increase in armed forces, stockpiling, re-equipment, gasoline conservation, stepping-up of war industry, etc.) points to a great increase in Satellite capabilities and readiness for military action.

4. We estimate that, against invasion by the armies of the four neighboring Satellite powers (Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Albania), Yugoslavia alone could maintain organized resistance for about three or four months. Guerrilla-type resistance would continue after collapse of organized resistance.

5. We estimate that, in the event of full-scale invasion by Soviet-Satellite forces, Yugoslav forces would be incapable of maintaining organized resistance for more than a month.

6. Substantial Western assistance in military materiel might enable Yugoslavia to defend itself successfully against a Satellite attack, and even to withstand a Soviet-Satellite attack for considerably more than a month. However, such materiel would have to be adapted to the special requirements of Yugoslav forces and would have to be delivered several months in advance of an attack.

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DISCUSSION

SOVIET OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO YUGOSLAVIA

1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito Government as soon as practicable, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure. Soviet control of Yugoslavia would greatly facilitate Soviet efforts to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean area and would eliminate a dangerous salient in the southeast European front of the Soviet bloc. Yugoslavia offers an approach for Soviet attacks into Greece or Italy, and is a potential threat to the southern flank of any Soviet advance into Western Europe. Moreover, and probably more basic in Communist calculations, the continued survival of the Tito Government as the only Communist regime not subservient to Moscow is an ideological threat to the Kremlin's control of the world Communist movement.

CURRENT STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF TITO'S REGIME

2. The Tito regime is stable. Internal security forces are large and efficient, and have dealt successfully with

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active opposition elements. Efforts of the Cominform to penetrate and undermine the regime by subversive means have thus far failed conspicuously. There is no evidence of effective organized opposition within the country and there are no serious personal rivals to Tito himself.

3. A majority of the Yugoslav population are non-Communists or even anti-Communists. Living standards are lower now than before the war. The resentment caused by the nationalization of the economy, by the campaign against religion, and by the development of police state techniques is still strong. In the party hierarchy there is some criticism of the maladministration of the import program and of unsatisfactory economic progress. It is always possible that some of Tito's followers, though seemingly loyal, may be awaiting an opportunity to improve their fortune at the expense of their leader.

4. Tito's freedom of political action is hampered by his paradoxical ideological position. Any considerable retreat from Communist theory or practice and any conspicuous associations with the Western Powers give substance to the Kremlin's contention that Tito is a traitor to Communism and might cost him the allegiance of some of his more zealous Marxist followers who are indispensable functionaries in his

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totalitarian regime. On the other hand, if he adheres too faithfully to Communist dogma, he may antagonize the Western Powers and non-Communist elements within Yugoslavia whose support is essential if national independence is to be maintained.

5. However, most of the Yugoslav people prefer the present regime to the reestablishment of alien control from Moscow particularly since the relaxation of some of the more unpopular totalitarian measures. Tito's bold and successful stand in the face of mounting Soviet and Satellite pressure has appealed strongly to Yugoslav national pride. Even the long-standing national minority tensions in the country are relatively quiescent. The improvement of Yugoslav relations with the Western Powers, and particularly with the US, has met favorable popular response. In the event of invasion, the great majority of Yugoslavs would support Tito and carry out what resistance was militarily possible.

SOVIET CAPABILITIES FOR OVERTHROWING THE TITO REGIME BY
MEASURES SHORT OF WAR

6. Since the break between Tito and the Kremlin, an economic blockade has been maintained by the Soviet orbit countries against Yugoslavia. Diplomatic relations have also been virtually suspended and Yugoslav diplomats have been

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harassed and intimidated by Cominform agents. Cominform propaganda has maintained a continuous campaign against Tito, and has portrayed him as a lifelong "Fascist agent" and a willing tool of Western imperialists in a conspiracy to attack the Soviet orbit. The economic and diplomatic isolation of Yugoslavia was for a time extremely dangerous to Tito's regime; without the support of the Western Powers, Tito might have collapsed. This danger now seems to be over.

7. Attempts have been made, and will undoubtedly be continued to undermine Tito's regime by the infiltration of subversive agents and saboteurs. Although the Yugoslavs are not easily frightened, Moscow may have some success in spreading the fear of war among Yugoslavs who live near the vulnerable frontiers. The USSR may attempt to stage internal uprisings in Yugoslavia, linked with guerrilla raids from the neighboring Cominform countries. It may subvert elements of Tito's own party who hope for an opportunity to succeed to power.

8. Assassination of Tito by Cominform agents is a continuing possibility. Tito's death would be a major blow to the regime, but would not automatically cause its collapse. Tito's lieutenants are as much committed to opposition to the Cominform as Tito himself. They would probably continue

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to adhere to the present principles of the regime. As a martyr to the Cominform, Tito might well be a source of strength in consolidating support for the present regime within Yugoslavia. Although stresses and strains would eventually develop in the absence of Tito's strong personality and leadership, they would not in themselves be likely to cause the overthrow of the regime during 1951.

9. Except for the possible ramification that might follow Tito's assassination, we believe that none of the methods short of war which the Kremlin may use will overthrow or even seriously weaken the present Yugoslav regime during 1951. Over a period of some three years the Kremlin has already applied to Yugoslavia the strongest economic, political, and psychological pressures of which it is capable. Tito has not been appreciably weakened by them; indeed his successful stand has apparently strengthened his position with the Yugoslav people. He is thoroughly conversant with the tricks and techniques which may be used against him. The period of his greatest vulnerability to such methods is past. It will now require armed invasion to overthrow his regime.

YUGOSLAV MILITARY FORCES AVAILABLE FOR DEFENSE

10. The Yugoslav Army has a current strength of approximately 275,000 men and could be expanded in 30 days to 600,000

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men organized in 40 fully equipped divisions. Yugoslavia has a further mobilization potential up to 1,000,000 men six months after commencing mobilization, but current and future availability of weapons would restrict arms for additional units to light infantry weapons and some field artillery. This additional manpower would assure an adequate flow of replacements. Yugoslav weapons are generally of good quality but heterogenous, with Soviet and German World War II models predominating. The outstanding weaknesses in equipment are in tanks (total strength about 400), anti-tank weapons, and anti-aircraft artillery. Yugoslav effectiveness would decline rapidly in the event of hostilities because of inability to replace material lost in combat. The Yugoslav Air Force totals approximately 650 planes, but is hampered by a shortage of spare parts. The Yugoslav Navy is small and inefficient but is nevertheless capable of successfully opposing any Satellite naval operation.

11. Yugoslav forces are capable of good combat performance, particularly if committed to the defense of the mountainous area of Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro rather than the Danubian plain. Many of the officers and non-commissioned officers had combat experience in World War II and since then have had fairly good training.

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12. In present circumstances, only limited improvement can be expected in Yugoslav capabilities during 1951. The Yugoslavs are currently attempting to purchase arms and equipment from foreign sources, particularly ammunition and spare parts for Soviet and German equipment now in use. Some material, such as small arms and light artillery, is being manufactured locally, but production is slow, and it will be some time before new equipment can be produced in significant quantities. Western military assistance in the form of weapons and equipment which could readily be integrated into Yugoslav units would materially strengthen Yugoslav defensive capabilities if the program were commenced several months before an invasion. Combat capabilities could be further increased by the acquisition of certain items of equipment, such as anti-tank weapons and rocket launchers from the West, but only after Yugoslav personnel had been trained in their use. Major assistance would be required to bring the Yugoslav Air Force to equality with the combined air forces of neighboring Satellites.

SOVIET AND SATELLITE ARMED FORCES AVAILABLE FOR INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

13. Soviet forces presently disposed in countries adjacent to Yugoslavia consist of six line divisions — two each

in Austria, Hungary, and Rumania -- and are insufficient by themselves for a successful invasion of Yugoslavia. Additional forces could, however, readily be drawn from the USSR to make up an adequate force for an invasion.

14. The armies of Albania, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria have been increasing steadily and now total approximately 473,000 men, organized in 36 divisions. In the case of Bulgaria and Rumania, strength is in excess of peace treaty limitations. With

* Since January 1, 1950, the ground force strength of the individual satellites has undergone the following changes:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>1 January 1950</u>	<u>Treaty Limitation</u>
Albania	45,000	50,000	—
Bulgaria	154,000	80,000	65,000
Hungary	68,000	36,000	70,000
Rumania	205,000	113,000	138,000

In addition, the following internal security forces are fully trained, armed and suitable for combat: Albania, 15,000; Bulgaria, 43,500; Hungary, 5,000; and Rumania, 66,000.

The apparent decrease from 50,000 to 45,000 in Albania reflects a revised estimate, not an actual reduction in troop strength

partial mobilization over a period of at least 30 days, it could be increased to 925,000 men organized in 47 line divisions, 11 combat brigades, and supporting independent regiments. Additional equipment would be required, but this could readily be supplied by the USSR by the end of April 1951. The armed forces of these Satellites are now estimated to be equipped with approximately 1,000 tanks, and reinforcements could be obtained on short notice from the estimated 700 tanks now with Soviet forces in these Satellites. Satellite air forces total approximately 900 combat aircraft; their combat effectiveness is low. Satellite naval forces are negligible.

15. The fighting qualities of these forces would be at least good in comparison with Yugoslav forces, particularly in successful offensive operations. Bulgarian and Rumanian forces are the best trained and equipped of the four Satellite armies, but all Satellite forces would have the major advantage of extensive and timely Soviet logistical support for an invasion of Yugoslavia.

16. There exists a further substantial Satellite reserve in the armies of Czechoslovakia and Poland. While, in case of need, these reserves might be thrown against Yugoslavia, the political and logistical problems involved in their use appear so great that this possibility seems remote.

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VULNERABILITY OF YUGOSLAVIA TO INVASION

17. Most of the areas along Yugoslavia's extended frontiers are highly vulnerable to invasion from the neighboring Satellite states. Northwestern Yugoslavia, including Slovenia and northern Croatia, could be quickly cut off from the rest of the country by a drive southward from Hungary through Zagreb and toward Fiume. The country north of the Sava River between Zagreb and the Danube could also be easily invaded at a number of points along the Hungarian frontier. The Danubian Plain north of Belgrade is especially vulnerable to armored attacks from either Hungary or Rumania. The Belgrade area would be hard to defend against attacks across the Danubian Plain or from the south through the Morava River valley. Yugoslav Macedonia could be cut off by attacks from Bulgaria and Albania directed toward Skoplje.

18. The industrial centers of Yugoslavia, on which the army currently depends for supplies, are located in the lowland border areas that would be overrun soon after hostilities had commenced. The better agricultural lands are in the same region and food would become a critical problem in the early stages of the campaign. Rail and motor routes from Trieste and Fiume would, in the event of an attack from Hungary, be cut off at an early stage.

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19. In spite of these important losses, the large mountainous area which includes Bosnia, Hercegovina and Montenegro is suitable for the organization and maintenance of a strong defense. Food and munitions are now being stored in the mountainous regions, but these supplies would be exhausted rapidly in the event of hostilities. Defense of this area, therefore, would depend on Western aid which could be supplied through several moderately good Adriatic Sea ports along the Dalmatian coast. These ports and their transportation facilities are, however, highly vulnerable to air attack. Also, the road and rail routes from Salonika are vulnerable to ground attack from Bulgaria and Albania. The mountainous defensive area would be vulnerable to enemy penetrations from the directions of Zagreb and Fiume if such penetrations were undertaken before the organization of defensive positions. Several points along the Dalmatian coast might be vulnerable to amphibious attacks launched from Albanian bases.

PROBABLE OUTCOME OF A SOVIET-SATELLITE OR SATELLITE INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

20. Tito's regime is unlikely to be overthrown by any small-scale or surreptitious operation. To insure the destruction of the regime, there would have to be a full-scale invasion, either by Soviet-Satellite forces jointly or by all the neighboring Satellite forces alone, with "unofficial" Soviet assistance as required.

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21. Joint Soviet-Satellite forces could successfully invade Yugoslavia, overcome organized resistance, and eventually bring guerrilla opposition under control. In present circumstances, it is estimated that if the Yugoslavs elect to defend on the Danubian plain, organized resistance could be destroyed within two weeks. Even if Yugoslav forces withdrew immediately to defensive positions in the mountains, it is estimated that organized resistance could be destroyed within one month. The elimination of guerrilla opposition would take considerably longer and would depend on the extent of outside aid to the guerrillas and the scale of the Soviet-Satellite effort. Timely Western aid could considerably lengthen the period of resistance to such an invasion.

22. In present circumstances, particularly in view of the Soviet capability of supplying continuing logistical support to the Satellites, the Yugoslav armed forces would be incapable of successfully opposing an invasion by the combined forces of Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Albania. It is estimated that organized resistance against these forces would continue for about three months and probably not for more than four months even if the forces were immediately withdrawn from the Danubian plain to defensive positions in the mountains. Yugoslavia would probably be able

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to defend itself against an invasion by Satellite forces alone, if it were provided with substantial Western military assistance. Such assistance, however, would have to include aid in the form of equipment which could be readily integrated into Yugoslav units which are now chiefly equipped with weapons of Soviet, German and Yugoslav manufacture. Furthermore, such assistance would have to be delivered several months in advance of an attack. In addition, aid would have to be on a continuing basis. In the last analysis, Western support would have to be on a scale large enough to neutralize Soviet logistical support to the Satellite forces.

LIKELIHOOD OF SOVIET-SATELLITE OR SATELLITE INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA DURING 1951

23. Since early in 1950 there have been indications of increasing military preparations in the Satellite states. The strength of their armed forces has been substantially increased. These forces have been re-equipped with Soviet materiel to a large extent and have engaged in increasingly large-scale maneuvers, occasionally with Soviet occupation forces in Hungary and Rumania. Except for Albania, they have substantial numbers of Soviet T-34 tanks, and more recently JS heavy tanks and self-propelled guns have appeared with the Hungarian forces. Extensive gas and food rationing suggests stockpiling. Ci-

villian defense measures have been undertaken. Increased registration for military service, including the medical profession, has been instituted, and security measures have been tightened. Satellite troops have been concentrated on the Yugoslav border and border incidents have increased. There have been rumors from Cominform circles of an impending attack on Yugoslavia in the spring. The Cominform has renewed its propaganda alleging that Yugoslavia intends to attack Albania and Bulgaria. For the first time Tito himself has begun to admit uneasiness. He has given serious consideration to seeking arms from the West and has attempted increasingly to tie Yugoslavia to the UN program of collective security. He has improved his relations with Austria, Italy, and Greece.

24. The scope of the recent Satellite military and logistical preparations and the intensity and character of the Cominform propaganda campaign against the Tito regime indicate that the USSR has been laying the groundwork for a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia. Although there is no evidence that a final decision has actually been reached, a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 must be considered a serious possibility.

25. The Kremlin may estimate that the difficulty of conquering Yugoslavia would be less, and the advantages to

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be gained greater, in 1951 than at a later date, in the belief that:

- (a) Yugoslav forces cannot maintain a successful organized resistance without military supplies from the Western Powers, and it is doubtful if military supplies of appropriate types and in sufficient quantity could be delivered in time to be effective during 1951.
- (b) The present unpreparedness of the Western European Powers would make it unlikely that they would intervene effectively in Yugoslavia in 1951.
- (c) The US, in view of its commitments in Korea and its obligations to strengthen the defense of Western Europe, would be unlikely at this time to allocate sufficient forces to the defense of Yugoslavia.
- (d) A successful attack on Yugoslavia during 1951 would serve larger Soviet purposes by demoralizing and intimidating the peoples of Western Europe, by frustrating the implementation of NATO plans, and by rendering European governments susceptible to accommodation with the USSR.
- (e) An attack on Yugoslavia after an additional year's build-up of US and NATO strength would greatly increase the danger of effective West-

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ern intervention and be more likely to provoke Western counteraction against the USSR.

26. The Kremlin may estimate that it would be able to launch an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 without incurring serious risk of a general war with the US. If the Kremlin decides on such an attack, it might pursue one of the following courses of action, of which the first appears the more likely:

- (a) Launch an attack of Satellite forces alone with covert Soviet assistance as necessary. The Kremlin may estimate that this course of action would not provoke an immediate US atomic attack on the USSR. Furthermore, the Kremlin may estimate that the fear of a general war with the USSR would prevent effective UN action against the Satellites or the USSR, thereby confronting the US with the dilemma of either intervening unilaterally or refraining from intervention in order to maintain Western unity.

This course of action would from the Kremlin's point of view have the advantage of great flexibility. It would offer scope for in-

creasing and decreasing the scale of Soviet intervention, and leave open the possibility of calling off the Satellites or negotiating a settlement if the conflict threatened to expand into a general war.

- (b) Launch a joint Soviet-Satellite attack. The Kremlin may estimate that this course of action would achieve such prompt and decisive results as to confront the Western Powers with a fait accompli before they could effectively intervene. Although this course of action would involve a greater risk of an immediate US atomic attack on the USSR than would an attack by the Satellites alone, the Kremlin may estimate that, regardless of the form of attack, the American people would not countenance initiation of an atomic war in behalf of Tito or be willing to invite Soviet retaliation before the completion of US defenses against atomic attack.

27. On the other hand, the Kremlin may estimate that even a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia would involve a greater

risk of general war with the US than it was prepared to accept during 1951. The Kremlin may conclude:

- (a) That in view of US-UN action in Korea, the UN would intervene immediately in Yugoslavia. Such intervention might create a situation that would require open Soviet support of the Satellite forces and thus carry with it grave risk of a general war between the US and the Soviet Union.
- (b) That the US would launch an atomic attack on the USSR. The USSR might find support for this conclusion in the strong US reaction to the Korean invasion, the extent and speed of subsequent US rearmament, US moves to rearm Germany and Japan, public statements by certain US officials advocating a preventive war, President Truman's general warning of last July regarding future Communist aggression, and Secretary Acheson's recent specific statement with respect to US interest in the preservation of Yugoslavia's independence. The Kremlin may also believe that US military leaders might welcome an occasion to use

their atomic capabilities before the USSR had further built up its retaliatory and defensive capabilities.

28. We are unable to estimate which of the above considerations are likely to determine a Soviet decision with respect to an attack on Yugoslavia. If the USSR estimates that it could launch a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia without grave risks of immediate US attack on the USSR and that it could withdraw successfully if US-UN reaction in Yugoslavia threatened a general war between the Soviet Union and the US, we believe that it will probably launch the attack. If the USSR does not wish itself to initiate war with the US, but is willing to accept such a war, we believe an attack on Yugoslavia is also probable. On the other hand, if the USSR estimates that an attack on Yugoslavia involves a serious risk of US retaliation against the USSR and if it is unprepared to accept this risk during 1951, the attack would not be made. We believe, however, that the extensive military and propaganda preparations which are currently taking place in the Satellites indicate that an attack upon Yugoslavia in 1951 must be regarded as a serious possibility.

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7. The scope of recent Satellite military and logistical preparations in the area and the intensity of the Cominform propaganda campaign against the Tito regime indicates that the USSR has been laying the ground work for a Satellite attack upon Yugoslavia. While there is no evidence that a final decision to launch an attack has been reached by the Kremlin, an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 in which Satellite forces are used must be considered a serious possibility.

8. The Kremlin may well estimate that the difficulty of invading Yugoslavia will be less and the advantages to be gained by such an invasion will be more in 1951 than later.

9. The Kremlin may further estimate that an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 even with overt Soviet participation may be launched without serious risk of involvement in a general war with the US, because of:

- (a) the unlikelihood of the UN's sanctioning the use of the A-bomb in 1951 in response to such an attack,
- (b) hesitation on the part of the US to act unilaterally in response to such an attack, and
- (c) general reluctance of the US to initiate an atomic war, particularly in behalf of Tito, and at a time before the completion of US defenses against Soviet atomic counter-attack.

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10. The Kremlin might estimate on the basis of the following considerations that an attack by Satellites alone would minimize the risk of a US atomic attack on the USSR:

(a) The Western European Powers, because of apprehensions of a general war with the USSR, would desire to treat the war as a local Balkan conflict and might therefore oppose UN intervention.

(b) The US might be unwilling to intervene unilaterally lest such action irreparably damage Western unity.

In this event the Kremlin might anticipate at the best that it could insure a speedy and decisive victory by giving ^{covert} aid to the Satellites, if necessary, without provoking US atomic attack on the USSR and at the worst that it would be able to call off its Satellites or negotiate a settlement if the conflict threatened to expand into a general war. We believe that it is likely that the Kremlin will adopt this method of attack if it decides upon an invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951.

11. The Kremlin may, however, estimate that even a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia would involve a greater risk of general war than it is prepared to accept in 1951 because of the possibility of UN intervention or US unilateral intervention in Yugoslavia, and the consequent possibility of a clash between UN or US troops and any Soviet troops sent in covertly or overtly to aid its Satellites.

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12. We are unable to estimate whether the Kremlin will conclude that an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 does or does not involve unacceptable risks of general war. We do estimate that if the Kremlin concludes that such an attack will not involve serious risks of a general war or if the Kremlin is now ready to accept general war, it will probably launch an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951. And we repeat that we believe that such an attack in 1951 is a serious possibility.

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